SLEEP,
the restorer

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Life Conservation Service
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JOHN HANCOCK MUTUAL LIFE
INSURANCE COMPANY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

FOREWORD

This booklet is principally about sleeping difficulties and sleeping habits of adults, and is addressed to them. There is so much to be said about this broad subject of rest that a discussion of sleep problems peculiar to babies and young children will not be included here. The mother perplexed by her baby's reluctance to take his nap when she thinks he should, or the father whose child refuses to go willingly to bed by daylight saving time, or the parent with other problems of the same sort, is invited to send for the John Hancock booklet appropriate to his child's age. In each of the booklets *Your Baby's Care*, *Between Two Years and Six*, and *The Healthy School Child*, the question of sleep is considered.

Healthy living makes for sound sleep.

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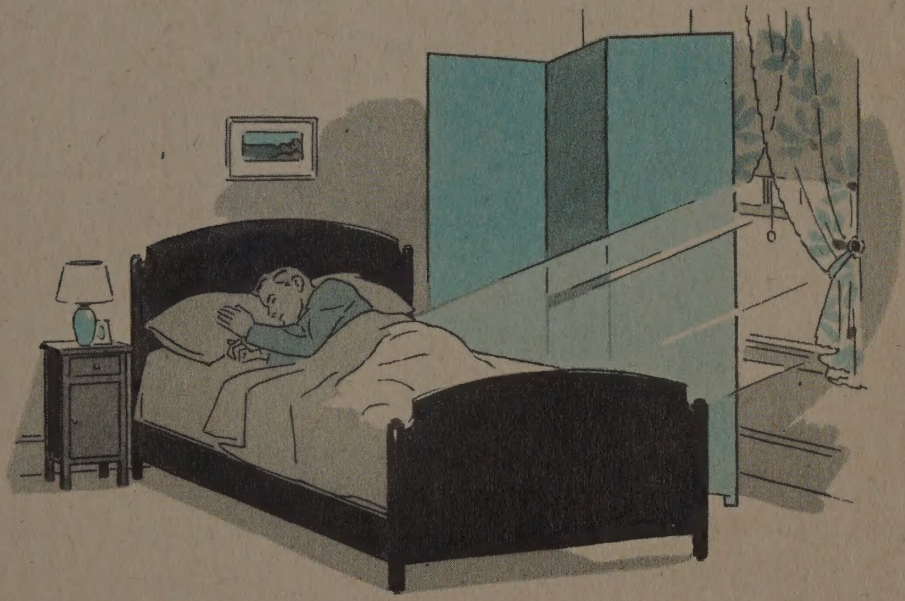
ON the dashboard of every automobile is a friendly indicator that reminds the driver how much, or how little, gasoline he has left in the tank. Without the gauge's help, the motorist often would find himself stranded far from a filling station without means of going on. You, too, have an indicator that tells you when your own supply of energy is running low. It is fatigue. You may call it exhaustion, weariness, or lassitude, but by whatever name you know it, it is a most valuable reminder to which you will do well to pay attention, for otherwise you, too, may find yourself running short of energy and far from the goal you have set for yourself.

There are two kinds of fatigue; one, the wholesome kind that comes from brisk muscular exercise, and another that is a warning of trouble brewing. After an active day spent in the open, or at hard manual work, you find yourself so tired that you just can't keep your eyes open, so you tumble into bed, stretch your tired legs and arms, and soon drop off to a deep, dreamless sleep. You are like the farmhand who said he didn't know what it was to have a good night's

sleep. When he went to bed, the next thing he knew it was morning.

Scientists who have studied the human body, explain the whole round of muscle activity, the resulting fatigue, and the curative rest in simple chemical terms. They tell us that when muscles are at work, they use for fuel a kind of animal starch, called glycogen, obtained from the food we eat. As it is used, waste products are formed, which are also common chemical compounds, principally carbon dioxide and lactic acid. The waste products are carried away slowly in the blood and disposed of through the breath and the excretions. When muscles work hard and long, waste products are produced faster than they can be removed by the blood. The excess remaining in the muscles causes the sensation of fatigue. During the sleep that naturally follows, all the body activities are slowed down, and then the excess of waste products can be carried away and eliminated. At the end of the night's sleep, we wake thoroughly refreshed, our supply of energy is renewed, and we are ready for the next day's work or play. So sleep may be called the indispensable process which enables the body to make use of its supply of energy. Without sleep, life is impossible.

But the other type of fatigue, the kind that warns of trouble, does not lend itself so readily to a simple chemical analysis. Here are some cases in point. The watchmaker, bent all day over his work desk, responsible for the safe repair of tiny, but often expensive watch movements, certainly does not expend the great amount of energy that sends the steel worker or the postman home dead tired at the end of the day. Yet the watchmaker, too, finds himself fatigued when his day's work is done. The office manager, or the shop foreman, may scarcely leave his desk chair all day long, but he too may find himself



Keep out all light possible and avoid reflected light.

exhausted by evening. Again, the mother of growing youngsters, at her wit's end with her children's difficulties at school, or from trying to make a half dozen pairs of small shoes do for scuffing feet that would wear out a dozen pairs, often finds herself completely worn out by housework that would seem most unlikely to produce such profound weariness. The work of the watchmaker, the office manager, or the housewife, is typical of many other occupations in which muscular effort is not very great, but the day's work is nevertheless exhausting. The resulting fatigue, aggravated perhaps by responsibility, worry, emotional upset, hurry, noise, or some other disturbing influence, is greatly relieved by refreshing sleep, but unfortunately these very conditions often make sleep difficult.

Unrelieved mental fatigue, instead of making the person drowsy, tends to do just the reverse; it stimulates and makes him over-sensitive to his surroundings. The danger signals that warn us that mental fatigue is reaching the breaking point are unreasonable fears, pronounced depression, prostration, and the feeling of utter inability to do simple things without superhuman effort. Persons suffering from advanced cases of nervous fatigue are upset by discomforts that mean nothing to the well individual. They are

distressed by the weather and surroundings. Noises and lights irritate them unduly. They are fidgety and restless. Frequently they suffer from nervous indigestion because even the nerves that govern the digestive tract are "on edge".

Complete rest is the cure for this condition, but the patient, being highly irritable, finds it difficult to sleep. Obviously such a person needs medical advice in finding the solution to his problem. First the underlying cause for the mental fatigue must be discovered, and a remedy for the condition found; then the cure of the sleeplessness itself may be attempted with some hope of success. The doctor may recommend outdoor exercise to take mind from self and to give the muscles more work. There may be some physical disorder which needs medical treatment. Proper eyeglasses may be needed. If the disturbing factors are rational worries about family difficulties or disappointments in business, for instance, the circumstances must be improved, or the person shown the way to make the best of his situation. Perhaps he may be given a new outlet for his interests, or a change of scene may help.

Though the medical problems arising from excessive mental fatigue cannot be settled in this booklet, there is much to be said about practical ways of assuring the sleep that relieves ordinary fatigue. In good

health, the natural inclination to let down after work is a trustworthy guide in the matter of rest. The relief from work that the body demands may come from sleep, from relaxation, or from some form of recreation. But the most beneficial of these is sleep.

Deep sleep gives the most refreshing rest, for the brain is either in a state of greatly reduced activity or complete unconsciousness, and the body movements and functions are largely suspended. The breathing is deep but retarded, the heart beats slowly, and the digestive processes are partially stopped. All sleep is not the same, however, for there are varying degrees of depth of sleep, which have varying effects in reducing fatigue. Your surroundings and your habits affect depth of sleep.

Length and Depth of Sleep

No one but yourself can tell how much sleep you need. It may be eight hours, for that seems to be the average for ordinarily healthy adults. But it may be that seven is enough, or you may need nine. The practical test is the way you feel when you wake. If you have had enough sleep, you should wake unaided, feeling refreshed and ready for the day's activities. If it takes an alarm, and repeated shaking

by a long-suffering parent to bring you back to life, and a cold shower followed by several cups of coffee to sweep the cobwebs from your brain, then your common sense tells you that you need more sleep.

The depth of sleep also matters. Some sleepers, because they are unconscious, assume that they have slept soundly. Observation of a large number of sleepers leads to the belief that many do not. The signs of disturbed sleep are: mumbling, restless movements, waking before average length, bed covers badly mussed. Depth of sleep is governed by the

The bed that sags is like the antiquated hammock.

condition of the bed, and the bedroom, and the habits of the sleeper, the last being the most important.

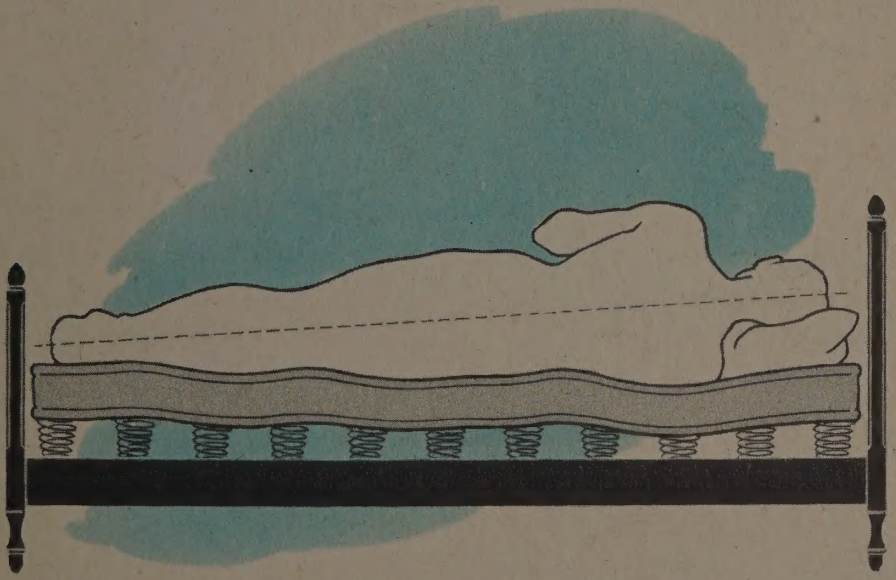
A Bedroom Conducive to Sound Sleep

Your bedroom has more effect than you might suppose upon the length and depth of your sleep. If you do not sleep soundly, there are certain things you can do to improve the sleep-producing conditions of the room you now occupy, and there are still other considerations that you should keep in mind when choosing a new home or another sleeping room.

After dark tonight, open the windows and arrange the shades as you usually do when ready for bed, and look carefully about you. Are bright street lights shining into your room? Are the lights reflected on mirrors, shiny metal, or glass? Has the woodwork a glossy finish that reflects the light? Are window shades and drapes dark? Is the bed best placed to avoid light?

As fresh air is essential to refreshing sleep, some window must be opened. If there is more than one window in your room, perhaps you can open the window widest on the darkest side of the house. Leave the shade pulled down low on the brighter windows. Dark green window shades that do not

permit light to pass through are better than semi-transparent yellow or tan colored shades. If outside light cannot be shut out, when the windows that must be open are raised to the height you want, then a folding screen may be placed between your pillow and the offending window; even a high-backed chair may help. Perhaps you can re-arrange your bed so your face is away from the light, if necessary sleeping with your head at the foot of the bed. If the light rays fall on mirrors, pictures, or shiny metal, move each reflecting object so that it is out of the beams of light, or cover it with a drape when you go to bed.



Coil springs and smooth mattress allow body to lie straight.

If the time comes when you have the opportunity to choose a new bedroom, or redecorate your present one, remember that walls and floor have an effect upon the restfulness of the bedroom. A soft-tinted wall-paper, without a brilliant pattern, is advisable. Greens or blues are to be preferred to reds or yellows. The woodwork, too, matters. The trim should be painted in some soft tone that does not reflect glare. For instance, a flat gray or buff should be used rather than a shiny white paint. Floor rugs are better if they are dark in tone and cover the whole floor, thus absorbing both light and sound. Window hangings, too, should be free of vivid patterns. In other words, the whole room should be soothing and free from violent colors. A sleeping-room should be designed as a restful place, not a gay one.

Your room is darkened as much as can be, let us assume. If it is still so light that your sleep is disturbed, there is one way left to keep your eyes in darkness. Using black material of a soft texture, a mask to fit the eyes is easily made, and it can be kept in place with soft elastic tape. If morning light bothers, it can be slipped on when first awakened. After a few times, it will be done almost automatically. Medical supply houses carry these for use of sanatorium patients who must sleep in the daytime.

A Critical Appraisal of Your Bed

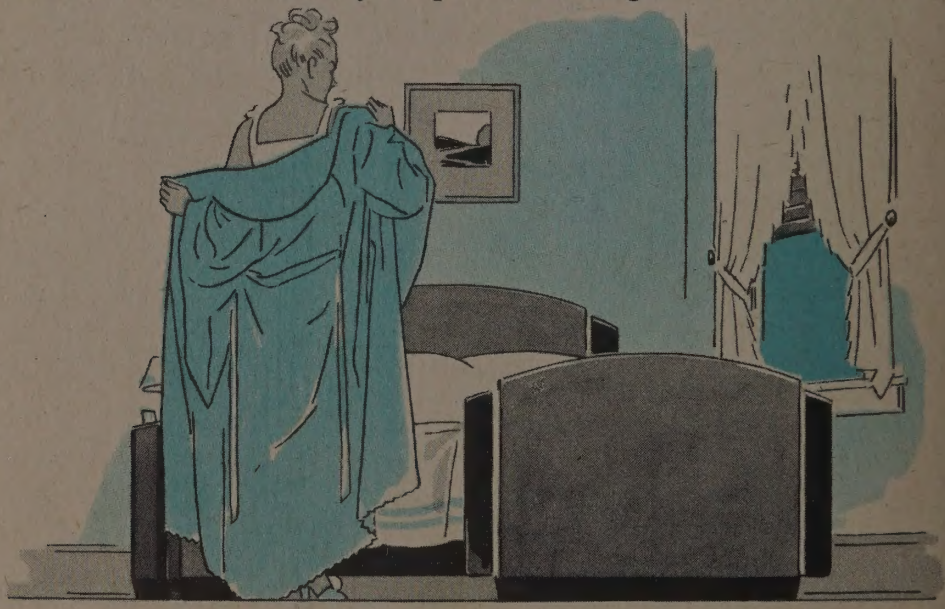
To encourage restful slumber, a bed should be long enough to lie in at full length, reasonably soft, so constructed as to maintain the body in a straight line, and should be equipped with light, soft blankets sufficient in number to keep the body comfortably warm. Few beds meet all these desirable specifications. Does yours?

It is not always easy to make immediate changes in bed springs and mattress, but when changes are to be made, keep these considerations in mind. Your bed spring should be made of coils of wire held properly in place. The so-called coil spring is best because it allows the body to remain generally in a straight line, individual springs giving way most beneath the hips and shoulders. The link spring, made of jointed wire links, attached to strong springs at head and foot, is the best substitute for the coil spring. A woven wire or fabric spring is least satisfactory because it tends to sag like a hammock.

Is your mattress moderately soft and free from lumps and hollows? If it is made of horsehair, the stuffing material should be renovated every few years. If it is one of the modern inner-spring mattresses, the padding between spring and coils and

mattress cover should be of good quality and reconditioned whenever it is pressed out of shape. As the coils of the springs form open cells in the mattress, allowing a certain amount of ventilation, inner-spring mattresses are cool in summer. If too cool in winter, a blanket may be placed between mattress and lower sheet.

The pillow should be only sufficiently thick to allow the head to remain straight with the spine when the sleeper is lying on his side. During sleep the body "banks the fires", so we need warmer and more covers than the body requires during the active hours



Shed the cares of the day when you get into bed.

of the day. Blankets should be made of wool of a loose, fluffy texture, for this type of cover retains the body heat without excessive weight.

Your Sleeping Habits

Having darkened your room, equipped yourself with the best type of bed, getting to sleep may yet be difficult. If so, it may be a matter of your habits. Without making a hard and fast rite of this business of going to sleep, it is reasonable to do the common sense things that help one compose himself for rest. Too much concentration on getting to sleep may well be the cause of wakefulness. The person finding it difficult to fall asleep will do well to remember that the body benefits almost as much by the physical relaxation one gets while stretched out comfortably in bed as by sleep.

Strenuous work, or exciting recreation should be discontinued about a half hour before bedtime. Exacting homework, or "high-pressure" card games are both a poor preparation for slumber. During this period of relaxation, the time may be occupied in reading pleasant stories that are not too exciting, or in eating a light dairy lunch, or in taking a warm tub bath. The obvious purpose of all these activities is

to reduce the nervous tension at which we ordinarily work and play. As this applies to all in the family, it is well to have a general understanding that the whole house is to be quiet after a set hour, the time depending upon the ages of the children in the family.

If you relax by reading, try this: get yourself ready for bed, then make yourself as comfortable as you can in an easy chair under a soft but good light and start your story. Probably you will not get far in it. If you read in bed, be sure you are comfortable and the light is good. There is little relaxation in reading in a cramped position or with glaring light improperly

Complete relaxation of EVERY muscle means deep sleep.

placed. Listening to quiet music over the radio is an excellent substitute for reading.

The desirability of eating just before bedtime is a matter of individual experience. Most people go to sleep more quickly when they have food in the stomach, and they sleep more soundly, too, once they have dozed off. It is common experience that one feels drowsy immediately after meals, and we know that animals almost invariably fall asleep after eating if they are not disturbed. Probably the drowsiness is due to the blood supply going more freely to the digestive organs than to the brain. The food should not be rich, greasy, or of a kind that is slowly or difficultly digested, for indigestible food interferes with soundness of sleep. A dairy lunch of bread, crackers, or cereal and milk or fruit, perhaps, does help most people who, if they go to bed hungry, are apt to be kept awake by the stomach's insistent signals to give it something to do.

Warm baths, too, are an individual matter. To most people, a quiet soak in a warm tub bath is most restful, particularly if the body is dried gently after the bath, not by too brisk a rub-down with a rough towel. If you try a warm bath each night for a week or so and are not soothed by it, obviously it is valueless to

continue. You may be one of those peculiar people who are soothed by a cold shower.

The use of coffee, tea, and other caffeine-containing drinks is another matter of your own experience. If you drink coffee or tea and do not go to sleep easily, but find that you do sleep when you don't drink it, your common sense will indicate that it is unwise to take the particular drink after the noon meal. The stimulation which these drinks produce does not last long with most people, and it may be that the *belief* that coffee or tea keeps you awake, not the drink, is what is interfering with your sleep.

Don't try counting sheep or other mental gymnastics.

Well, you have finished the hour of let-down from strenuous living and are about to get into your sure-to-make-you-sleep bed in your darkened room. Now comes the test of the power of your will over your mind. You must shed your cares as you do your day's clothes when you get into bed. You can, if you will, put out of your mind most of your small worries and perplexities. In times of great stress or trying emergency, it is not to be expected that all thought of pressing problems can be completely erased from the mind. But as you can do nothing about your everyday business or family problems anyway until morning, it will do no good to mull over them in the dark. Instead turn your mind to some pleasant prospect: for instance, how to get the most fun from the next week-end; the most good from your next summer's vacation. Before sleep is the time to plan pleasant things to do in the increasing hours of leisure. Of course there are other pleasant topics than leisure. Find them.

Finally, relax your muscles. This is probably a new suggestion to you, but you can, if you will, take thought about the muscles first in your legs, then your body, then your arms; being sure that each group is completely relaxed and each limb is perfectly

comfortable, neither cramped, in an unnatural position, nor unintentionally taut. When the body is totally at rest in all its parts, you will probably be unaware of it, for you will have dropped off to sleep.

It must not be assumed that these suggestions will surely put you to sleep, for there are times and conditions when sleep is well-nigh impossible. But, in all seriousness, it is true that the ordinarily healthy, busy person who is active in work or play, who gets a reasonable amount of outdoor recreation, will sleep

If you think you must have sleep medicine, tell your troubles to your doctor.

well if he follows these hints.* If you have tried conscientiously to follow them all and you still have serious sleeping difficulties, then something is wrong. You need medical advice. See your doctor and follow his suggestions to the letter.

A Word of Warning

Don't take sleep-producing drugs except under a doctor's orders, and then only as he prescribes. Sleep-producing drugs are habit-forming if taken over a long period of time. The healthy person doesn't need them; the sick person who does should have treatment given to remove the cause of his sleeplessness, as well as drugs to allow him to sleep.

Another word: be regular in your sleeping habits; try to go to bed at about the same time each evening. Undoubtedly there will be many occasions when something interferes, for none of us is a hermit, out of all contact with friends and business responsibilities, but you can see to it that such occasions are not too frequent. Make up for anticipated loss of sleep beforehand: for instance, when you know you are going to be out at a late party on Saturday night, then go to bed a little earlier on Friday.

*Good general health habits help. LIVING THE HEALTHY LIFE has suggestions about them. Ask for a copy.

Relaxation

Deep sleep at night is the first and most effective defense against fatigue, but there are other factors that help. The ability to relax at intervals during the day is of great value in preventing fatigue. What you do during the noon hour before or after you eat your luncheon affects the way you finish your working day. Many people find a chance to relax at the close of work after washing up for the evening meal. If there is some night chore to be done, or some business demand is made upon your time in the evening, a brief period of relaxation while stretched out flat before you begin the work may give the needed rest to allow you to do the evening's stint without undue fatigue. The busiest people, men of affairs, who accomplish more than the average man, often keep going because they find time and learn how to relax briefly between jobs.

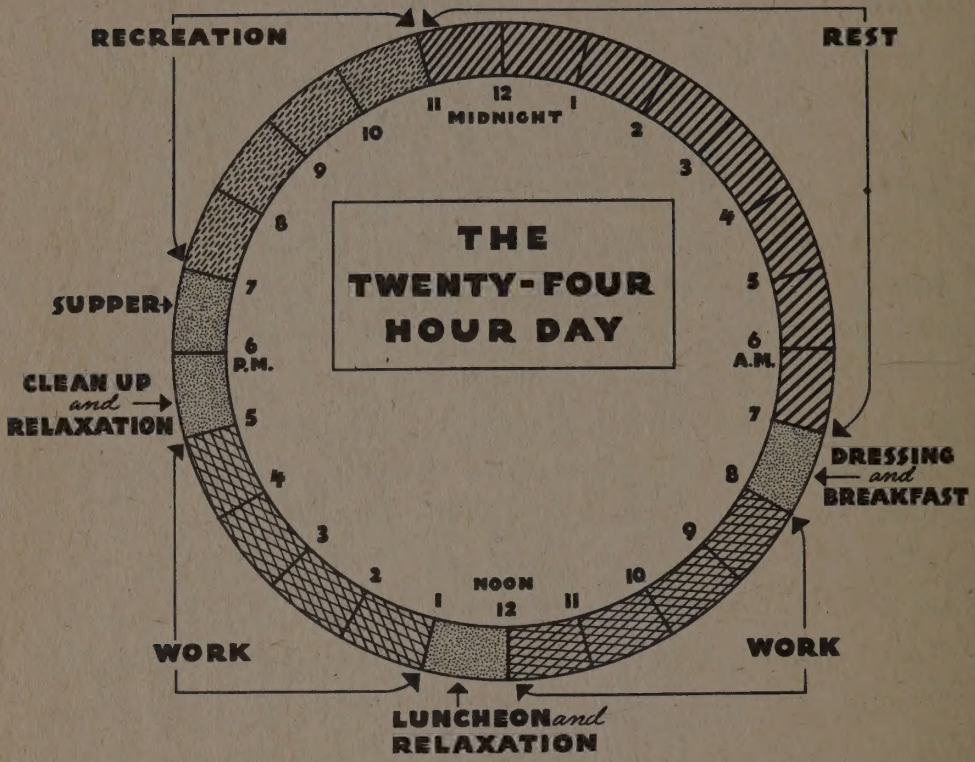
Recreation

Pleasant occupations and activities that divert the mind are well named recreations, for they do re-create energy and are most valuable in preventing mental fatigue. It is for each to discover the kind of energy re-creating fun that best suits his tastes and to develop and foster this hobby or activity. It may be some

game of skill or chance; it may be some craft work or a collecting hobby, but whatever it is, the wise person will see that sufficient time is given to it so that he has a complete change from his daily work and a satisfying outlet for his restless, pent-up energies.

Evening hours are well spent when devoted to a hobby that is fun. Parts of Saturdays or Sundays devoted to a satisfying diversion renew the supply of energy needed for the week's work. The summer vacation wisely spent can do much to maintain the mind on an even keel, and to prevent mental fatigue. After summer holiday weeks unwisely spent, the vacationer may return to his work physically exhausted and nervously on edge.

To sum up the whole matter of rest, it appears from the hourly diagram on the next page that the week day, usually, divides itself into about equal thirds. Roughly a third is spent asleep, a third at work, and a third in relaxation and recreation, including meals and caring for the body. With such a balanced workday, with the thirds wisely spent, the fatigue at the day's close should be the wholesome kind that sends us to bed ready for sound sleep, not the unwholesome mental fatigue that makes sleep increasingly difficult.


RECREATION
REST
THE TWENTY-FOUR HOUR DAY
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SUPPER
CLEAN UP and RELAXATION
DRESSING and BREAKFAST
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